

TESTIMONY ON SB 33
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 24, 2014

Representative Rojas, Senator Osten and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

My name is Tony Bialecki and I am providing testimony as the Vice-Chairman of the New Haven Parking Authority ("Park New Haven") on Senate Bill 33, "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NEW HAVEN REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY". The overall concept of a Development Authority as described in the Bill will provide an effective tool to further promote economic and community development benefitting New Haven and the region. We have witnessed significant growth in New Haven over the last few years and I believe the City is poised to take advantage of numerous opportunities in the years to come particularly the demand for increased public transit and Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

Union Station in New Haven is the 11th busiest train station nationwide by boardings. Approximately 750,000 riders on Amtrak alone use the station each year not including the 3,700 commuters who catch Metro-North each day. In addition, the station is used by Shoreline East commuters and in the near future will serve as one of the primary stops for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter line currently under construction.

I am proud to describe a great partnership with the State. Since 1985, the New Haven Parking Authority has managed and operated for the State, the Union Station Transportation Center and Garage. While Park New Haven runs the day to day operations, we sit with our counterparts from the State Department of Transportation on a Joint Advisory Committee or JAC that develops policy for station operations and determines how to divide any surplus revenue. Over the course of this thirty year partnership, Park New Haven has, without running a single deficit, been able to finance every improvement it has made, including the 900 space Garage from the proceeds of on-site activities. Having already spent \$6 million on capital repairs and related improvements, we are currently underway with an additional \$8 million worth of repairs and upgrades. We are continuously modernizing the operation, installing state of the art revenue system, security systems, improving bike access and numerous other customer service improvements. In addition to infrastructure, Park New Haven has implemented a complete customer improvement program to transform the way in which the organization serves its parkers, visitors, commuters and the general public.

In addition to Union Station, Park New Haven has been a key partner in the economic development of downtown New Haven over the last 20 years providing affordable, safe and efficient parking to the office and retail sectors as well as the booming residential market. We work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, the local restaurant and retail associations and development organizations implementing specific programs and strategizing on future development. These relationships and experience with local development over such a long period of time positions the organization well to be a key partner in New Haven's future growth.

In addition to my role as Vice-Chair of Park New Haven I retired last year as Deputy Director of Economic Development for the City of New Haven after 25 years having been a part of the dynamic development activity taking place in the City. I have recently been working for the South Central Regional Economic Development Agency known as REX. In my role at REX I have been working on the implementation of the recently developed 2013-17 South Central Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, a working document serving 15 municipalities and required by the Federal Economic

Development Agency. One of the key priorities of the 5 year Development Strategy is continued funding for public transit infrastructure and creating opportunities for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in our region. Because of this, the legislation before you is an important first step for the City, the region and the State of Connecticut to create jobs and new business in our State. I believe Matt Nemerson, the Development Administrator for the City of New Haven has suggested amendments to SB33 and I urge your consideration of these changes. Park New Haven looks forward to working as a partner with the City of New Haven, the Region and the State of Connecticut on establishing a New Haven Region Development Authority.